

Good Afternoon,

My name is Sherri Therrien. I am delighted to be here in support of bill #5455:
**AN ACT CONCERNING PARENTAL INFORMATION PROVIDED TO AN ADULT CHILD
AFTER PARENTAL RIGHTS ARE TERMINATED.**

On April 4, 1990, I was called to my eight grade principles office. He informed me that there was a rumor circulating around the school that I was pregnant. I wanted to tell him that this was a ridiculous rumor since I was only 14 years old, but I couldn't say that since the rumor was true. He advised that I tell my parents that evening, or he would contact them with the news. I asked if I could hold off for just one more day since it was my mothers birthday, the answer was no, they had to know that evening.

So on my mothers 34th birthday, I explained that I was pregnant. This was the beginning of a very long journey. I thought telling my parents this news was going to be the most difficult part, however, I found that to be false. On September 2, 1990, I gave birth to my son, Alex. After sharing four days with Alex in the hospital, I had to set him down and say good-bye for what I thought would be 18 years as it was decided that he would be placed for adoption. I thought *this* is the most difficult part of it.

I was wrong again.

As it turns out, the most difficult part would be finding out that I may not be able to see him at the age of 18 after all, in fact I may never see him again.

How could this be? I was assured time and time again by the adoption agency that as soon as Alex turned 18, I would be able to initiate contact for a reunion.

I am unable to contact the agency because they are no longer operating.

Everything is now in the hands of D.C.F..

In my final conversation with D.C.F., I was informed that there is no way for me to ever contact Alex, there is no way to at least put a letter in front of him to let him know that I'm trying to reunite. In fact, if Alex contacts D.C.F. today, he will be denied my contact information, and will have no clue that I have been trying reach out to him.

This all stems from a current law that says both biological parents need to sign consent forms in order to move forward in reuniting.

This was never explained to me prior to relinquishing my parental rights. I was never informed that I would one day need to rely on Alex's father, that he would have this kind of power over me. In my case, the fact is that Alex's father won't sign this very important form because he is not only angry that I ended our relationship over 18 years ago, but that I declined to meet with him this past October. Please note that this is not the only case in point where this law stands in the way, it would also be problematic if a biological parent simply could not be found in order to sign the consent form. I am asking for your help in changing this law. An adopted individual should never be denied the right to meet his/her biological parent(s).

If the adopted individual decides he or she does not wish to meet the biological parent(s), that's fine, however, it should ultimately be in his or her hands. The adopted individual should know the option is on the table.

If this could be turned around, it would mean many happy endings..

Thank you for your consideration.